

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments' Application to the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We write in support of the application submitted by Connecticut's Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) to the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Fiscal Year 2022 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program. NVCOG is requesting \$1,440,000 to conduct a comprehensive study of the Route 8 Expressway's negative impact on Naugatuck Valley communities and to make recommendations for mitigating such impacts.

The Route 8 Expressway was built over a span of 35 years beginning in the early 1950s, and was designed to improve transit to, from, and between cities within the Naugatuck Valley. At the time, the valley was robustly industrial, with compact city centers, and Route 8 was envisioned as a vital artery connecting the Naugatuck Valley's bustling downtown areas to the rest of the region. The expressway was built directly through numerous municipalities, fracturing neighborhoods that had previously been cohesive and integrated. In many Naugatuck Valley communities, Route 8 has been and remains a barrier to inter-neighborhood mobility, economic development, land use, and social activity.

NVCOG's proposed study – titled CONSERVE8 – will document how Route 8 has disrupted Naugatuck Valley communities, and identify feasible strategies for mitigating the resulting harms. In particular, CONSERVE8 will evaluate opportunities to expand micro-mobility (pedestrian, bicycle, e-assisted devices and transit) connections between separated neighborhoods, many of which are racially diverse areas of persistent poverty.

When Congress established the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we envisioned revitalizing communities and neighborhoods like those fractured by the Route 8 Expressway. This funding presents an important opportunity to rectify historic underinvestment in Naugatuck Valley's economically-

distressed communities, and we are committed to working with NVCOG over the long term to realize CONSERVE8's goals. We urge your full and fair consideration of NVCOG's application.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress



JAHANA HAYES
Member of Congress



JIM HIMES
Member of Congress